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Tel-a-Vision of Thankfulness

By Dorothy Haas

Characters

Mrs. John Ames
Mrs. Merton
Mrs. Ferris
Mrs. Ream

Group of Women attending a meeting at the home of Mrs. Ames. Any number may be used.

Voice on Radio. *(The person taking this part should be off stage when speaking. It would be much more effective if a microphone could be used. The person should speak slowly and very distinctly.)*

Girl from India. *(Dressed in a sari.)*

Five College Girls. *(Each of these girls should carry a pennant of the school which she represents. A capital letter indicating the first letter in the name of the school may be placed in the center of each pennant. The colors to be used are: Capital University, purple and white; Hebron, black and gold; Waverly, orange and black; Regina, black and gold; Seguin, black and gold.)*

Group of Small Mexican Children. *(These may be dressed in colorful Mexican costumes.)*

Colored Woman.

Native of New Guinea. *(May be dressed in the type of dress which is made for the Christmas boxes.)*

Setting

Both scenes take place in a modern living room. A radio is needed for the second scene. For the television scenes a platform at the side or back of the radio is necessary. There should be some curtain arrangement so that characters may appear suddenly at the proper time and disappear as quickly.

Scene I

(Modern living room. Mrs. Ames is dialing a telephone number as curtain is drawn.)

Mrs. Ames: Hello, Mary, this is Sarah Ames. Yes. Isn't it a lovely morning? I know it is very early in the morning to be

calling you, but I have some wonderful news that I just couldn't keep to myself a minute longer. I am so happy and I would like to share my joy with you. Well, it's this. This morning I found a little scroll beside my breakfast plate. I opened it and found this message: "To my dear wife, — one week from today you will be celebrating a birthday anniversary. Usually we do not present gifts a week in advance, but it is very necessary that you be informed about your birthday remembrance at this time. The American Radio Corporation, which your husband has the honor to serve as general manager has now perfected a radio with television for the home. It has been my privilege to plan and set the date for the first program to be broadcast. I chose your birthday as the date and since this is November, a month which means Thankoffering to you, I have planned a program especially for such an occasion. May I offer this suggestion: that you invite the members of your missionary society to have their annual Thankoffering meeting at our home. I hope that you will enjoy this service as much as I have enjoyed planning it. We have sent word throughout the American Lutheran Church that this program will be on the air." Oh, Mary, I have read and reread this and yet I can hardly believe that such a beautiful tribute will be paid to me. Yes, I think it is wonderful! And isn't it a splendid idea to invite the missionary society? I know that Mrs. Merton, our president, will be very grateful as only yesterday she told me that the service programs hadn't arrived and she was very much worried. Now this comes as an answer to our prayer. Yes, it will be a relief to her. Well, goodbye, Mary, I won't detain you any longer. Goodbye. *(After hanging up the receiver she folds her hands and bows her head in prayer:)* Dear God, I come to Thee this morning, with praise and thanks for all the many blessings which Thou hast bestowed upon me. I thank Thee especially for the gift of Thy dear Son who taught us the blessedness of giving. May this Thankoffering month bring us to a greater realization of Thy bountiful goodness. I thank Thee for a kind and loving husband who also is interested in the great mission work of the Church. May the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with an ever-increasing love for the work of Thy kingdom. All these things I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

(Curtain is drawn.)

SCENE II

(One week later in the Ames' home. The only change in the scenery is an additional piece of furniture, the radio. As the curtain is drawn three or four women are in the living room. Doorbell rings and Mrs. Ames greets more guests. Women on stage converse. Each one should have her Thankoffering box. Any number of women may take part in this scene. As ladies enter they might offer birthday greetings to Mrs. Ames.)

MRS. AMES *(After all have arrived):* Well, I did not think I would be having this meeting in my home the last time I saw most of you. Have you noticed my new radio?

MRS. MERTON: It is beautiful. I can hardly wait for the program. How many minutes must we wait?

MRS. AMES: We have exactly five minutes. That will give us sufficient time to have a short opening service, won't it?

MRS. MERTON: Let us bow our heads in prayer.

"We give Thee but Thine own, Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.
May we Thy bounties thus As stewards true receive,
And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our first-fruits give.
To comfort and to bless, To find a balm for woe,
To tend the lone and fatherless — Is angel's work below.
The captive to release, To God the lost to bring,
To teach the way of life and peace — It is a Christ-like thing.
And we believe Thy word, Though dim our faith may be;
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord, We do it unto Thee.
Amen."

That is all I had planned for the opening. Don't you think we had better turn on the radio now, Mrs. Ames?

MRS. FERRIS: We don't want to miss any of it.

MRS. REAM: Aren't you excited? I can hardly wait. Isn't it almost time?

MRS. AMES: Yes, it is. All I need to do is press the button and wait. *(All sit quietly with eyes fixed on the radio. Soon are heard the strains of "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." This may be either an instrumental number or a vocal selection.)*

VOICE ON RADIO: This is station CKFA. We are privileged to broadcast to you this afternoon a most unusual type of program

through the courtesy of the American Radio Corporation. Today marks the beginning of radio's newest invention — television for the home. As this is something to which we have looked forward for some time we spent no little effort in the selection of a program suitable for such an occasion. Mr. John Ames, the general manager of the American Radio Corporation, has devoted much of his time and talent to the perfection of this invention. In appreciation of his services he was permitted to choose the type of program to be broadcast. Today is the birthday anniversary of Mrs. Ames. We dedicate this service to her. Mr. and Mrs. Ames are active members of the American Lutheran Church, of which the Women's Missionary Federation is a very important part. Each year the month of November has a special significance for every woman of this organization. Special Thankoffering services are held to which the members bring money boxes containing offerings of love which have been placed therein throughout the year. This money is used entirely for mission work. Mr. Ames has so arranged that people from the various fields in the world who have benefited by these gifts may speak to you. Not only will you be able to hear them, but, thanks to television, you may also see them. We shall begin this program with a beautiful missionary hymn "Christ for the World We Sing." *(This may be used as a solo number or may be sung by a group. The melody used is for "Come Thou Almighty King" No.* 480 *A. L. C. hymnal.)*

"Christ for the world we sing;
The world to Christ we bring,
With loving zeal;
The poor and them that mourn,
The faint and over-borne,
Sin-sick and sorrow-worn,
Whom Christ doth heal.

"Christ for the world we sing;
The world to Christ we bring,
With fervent prayer;
The wayward and the lost,
By restless passions tossed,
Redeemed at countless cost,
From dark despair.

"Christ for the world we sing;
The world to Christ we bring,
With one accord;
With us the work to share,
With us reproach to dare,
With us the cross to bear,
For Christ our Lord."

VOICE ON RADIO: As Jesus was going up into heaven, His last words were the command, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost parts of the earth," words which have ever since been a missionary challenge to His followers. It seems strange that we should be so slow in grasping the meaning of a statement made so clearly, for it has been nearly two thousand years since Jesus lived, and there are still many sections of the world where people have had no opportunity to know about Christ. The women of the American Lutheran Church have taken up the banner of their Savior and hand in hand with their Church have raised it over heathen lands. From India's coral strand comes a maiden to greet you, ladies.

(A girl from India takes her place near the radio.)

GIRL FROM INDIA: Kind and good ladies, I bring you love and thankfulness from your sisters in India. It is you to whom we are grateful for giving $75,000 to build our beautiful and comfortable hospital at Renigunta. You not only made possible the building of such a needed institution, but you maintain it and the staff. Many a soul has been won for Christ through the loving ministrations received at this hospital. I was one who would not listen to your Bible women in the streets. I ran from them and hid so that they might not find me as I did not care to hear about their Christ. It was not until I was near death one evening that I listened to a Bible story. I lay in the dusty yard in front of my hut, at the point of death due to the torture which I had suffered during the day. Having been very ill for several days, I lay weak from hunger and severe pain. My mother, thinking some evil spirit was the cause of this sickness, took hot irons and held them on my arms, my chest, and my legs. This was her way of driving out the evil spirit. It was in this condition that the Bible woman found me. I did not have the strength to run away this time. I lay and listened. I can hear her repeat those words, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." From that day I have been a Christian. I was taken to your hospital where my soul and body found peace and were healed. Your sisters in India implore you — continue to help us. God bless you for your gifts.

(Girl disappears.)

VOICE ON RADIO: Thank you, dear sister from India. We wish that time permitted us to hear more testimony from your

country. We are certain that the girls from the Lace school at Nayudupet would like to express their gratitude.

(A group of co-eds enter as a pianist plays Capital University's school song.)

That music reminds one of college days. Right I am, for here comes a group of fine looking co-eds. We'll let them tell you from where they have come.

(Co-eds appear, each carrying a pennant representing her school.)

CO-ED FROM CAPITAL UNIVERSITY: I bring you greetings from Capital University at Columbus, Ohio. The Women's Missionary Federation furnished the fine kitchen equipment for our girls' dormitory. Our thanks to you.

CO-ED FROM WAVERLY, IOWA: You gave $2,000 for the beautifying of our girls' dormitory at Waverly, Iowa. We, too, thank you for helping to make our days at school more pleasant.

CO-ED FROM HEBRON: I represent our school at Hebron, Nebraska. I have heard how the Women's Missionary Federation furnished the girls' dormitory there at a cost of $2,000. To show our gratitude we have decided to make ourselves useful members of your organization on leaving school.

CO-ED FROM REGINA: I represent your school at Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. You will never know how much we girls appreciate the beautiful $75,000 dormitory which you built for us. God bless all of your future projects.

CO-ED FROM SEGUIN: We co-eds at Seguin are thankful that you were willing to give us $2,000 so we as well as the boys could have lockers and showers in the gymnasium. Our dormitory too has benefited by your gift. Luther College thanks you.

(Co-eds join in singing the following song. Use the melody for Auld Lang Syne".)

Oh, W. *(double-u)* and M. and F.
We're here to cheer for you.
You are our friends so dear and true,
We'll always think of you.
Oh, W. and M. and F.
We pray for all of you.
Some day we'll be good members too
Of the W. M. F.

(Exeunt, repeating the song.)

VOICE ON RADIO: Here is a group of happy children who are almost bursting with joy because they have been chosen to appear on this program. Manuel, what do you wish to say to your radio audience?

MEXICAN BOY: Kind ladies, you were so good to us Mexicans in Texas. Thank you for our schools and chapels. We learn so many nice things there, especially about Jesus. We had never heard about the Savior until you brought Him to us. We would like to sing a song for you that we all love to sing in school.

(Children sing—"Our Hands Are So Small" Songs of Praise, No. 43.)

MEXICAN BOY: And now goodbye, nice ladies. Thank you again. *(Children wave as they leave.)*

("Dixie" should be played softly.)

VOICE ON RADIO: That melody reminds us of the South.

(Colored woman appears.)

COLORED WOMAN: It sho' does, Mis' Radio 'Nounca. Tha's jes' where I come from. I'm one of th' teachers fo' the Women's Missionary Fed'ration. They sho' are a fine bunch of ladies. They pay mah sal'ry. Yes ma'am, the good Lawd has some fine helpers. We love them, ev'ryone, yes ma'am.

("Dixie" repeated as she leaves.)

VOICE ON RADIO: There is an island many miles from here called New Guinea. But it seems that distance does not interfere with the work of the Women's Missionary Federation. Wherever there are people, Christ must be also.

(Native of New Guinea arrives.)

NATIVE OF NEW GUINEA: We certainly thank you for our hospital. We need it for our many sick people. Before you came we did not know how to care for our sick. We made them suffer more than we helped them. We didn't believe there were such good people living as you have proved to be. We are sorry that we seemed ungrateful at first. Forgive us, for we didn't know what we were doing. You came over and helped us and for this we thank our God every day. Now you are providing a Health Station for our missionaries. We are truly glad that they will have a place to rest and regain strength so they may serve us the better. *(Native disappears.)*

VOICE ON RADIO: And so this Women's Missionary Federation is so busy doing a multitude of good deeds that we could spend many more hours telling you about them. But there is one fact that must not be overlooked. All of these projects are made possible by funds gathered once a year in little boxes called the Thankoffering Box. Coins are placed in each box as an offering from a thankful heart to God for His love and care. As this is Thankoffering month, societies throughout the American Lutheran Church are gathering in these boxes. Today there is just such an ingathering at the home of our general manager, Mr. Ames. Each person who attends a Thankoffering service brings a gift. We have heard of the many blessings the Thankoffering makes possible. Certainly all should wish to have the privilege of making a contribution. Before we close our program let us have these gifts collected and while doing this I wish that all who are listening would take part in singing, *"Take My Life and Let It Be."* If you do not know this song from memory you may find it on page 324 in the *"Songs of Praise." (The entire audience should take part. This may be announced before the play begins.)*

Now as we leave you may we wish you all a more blessed Thankoffering year. Always remember:

"A bit of time
A bit of love
Shared happily each day;
A bit of prayer
For another's soul —
This is the Thankoffering way."
—*Selected.*

(As curtain is drawn a group back stage may sing "In Christ There Is No East or West" Songs of Praise No. 233.)

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